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**DEVELOPING CULTURE POLICIES:
CANADIAN VALUES**

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The Context

On May 12, 2000, the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, in partnership with Hugh Stephens (ADM for Communications, Culture and Policy, DFAIT) and Minister Axworthy's office, organised the first roundtable in a series of discussions with Ann Medina and Colin Jackson, aimed at developing further foreign affairs culture policy. Heritage Canada was also present. During this meeting, Ann Medina and others suggested that "there is a need to conceptualise culture more broadly as permeating other aspects of Canadian public (foreign) policy and as encompassing a range of collective values and norms (political, social, economic, etc.). Based on this broad understanding of culture, Hugh Stephens proposed that, drawing on its extensive work with Canadians, the Centre prepares a paper on Canadian values.

The following is a short synopsis of those values/principles, practical experience/expertise and niches frequently identified by Canadians as worth promoting, protecting and reflecting internationally. Much of the value added of Canadian foreign policy stems from "Canada's strengths by virtue of its domestic nature." Meanwhile, Canada's leverage in the world hinges, among other things, on the perception of Canada's historical and present role in the international system.

This synopsis drew primarily on National Forum Reports: Canada and the UN Security Council (1999), Canada's Circumpolar Relations (1998), Asia-Pacific (1997), and most extensively, Peacebuilding, International Communications and Child Protection (1996). The National Fora reflect the views of a large number of Canadians from different sectors and backgrounds. The Centre's work on the Americas and other country and issue specific reports (Cyprus, Sudan, Water-related issues) were also consulted.

Canadian Values and Principles

Some of the frequently identified Canadian values and principles for foreign policy development in general include:

1. ***Support for diversity***: Canada supports and nurtures diversity within its own borders. Multiculturalism could be a powerful tool for Canadian foreign policy. For instance, Canada's "experience" with diversity could aid countries struggling in the aftermath of intrastate conflict based on ethnic, religious and other differences. Moreover, Canada's diversity of views and ideas broadens the menu of possible foreign policy options. The "process of diversity" points to Canada's willingness to work in different ways. Both

make Canada an attractive partner for diversified societies in peace or in conflict. (Here peace includes the precarious pre and post conflict state.)

2. ***Promotion and nurturing of inclusiveness and dialogue***: Canada promotes consultative approaches, aims to include minorities and the marginalised in developing policies and encourages indigenous-grass roots movements. Besides Canada's acceptance of diversity, Canadians display distinctive willingness to listen and learn from others. This Canadian trait is reflected in Canadian foreign and development policies. Both take steps to ensure democratic development assistance reflects local values and history. Canada is also more willing than other countries to recognise its mistakes and disengage from unsuccessful mandates.

3. ***Support for democracy***: Canadians hold high democratic principles. In the context of foreign policy, the most cited principles include: the rule of law, commitment to protect human rights, commitment to promote fundamental equality (gender equality, for instance), and "good" governance. These values should permeate all foreign policy. Respect for human rights (and increasingly also social, cultural and economic rights) has been frequently promoted by Canadians as one of the most important components of Canada's foreign policy.

4. ***Strong sense of social justice***: While Canadians do frequently recognise the important role of private business in economic development, they also promote issues related to social justice (i.e., universal social programmes, public education, large role of labour and other unions in Canada's economic life, etc.).

5. ***Environment and sustainable development***: Care for the environment and making development self-sufficient and sustainable frequently make it to the list of Canadian normative priorities for foreign policy development.

Canadian Practical Experience/Expertise and Possible Canadian Niches[1]

The most cited "hands-on" areas where Canada could offer practical assistance, expertise or simply share information include:

1. ***Modes of coexistence:*** Canadian experience with coexistence in the context of flexible federalism could be useful to some multi-ethnic/multi-nation countries (particularly in their state building phase) in signalling the opportunities and challenges they may have to face. These challenges could include: fiscal arrangements, Constitution writing, the provision of public services and so on. Moreover, Canada could share its experience in

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[1]Some of these points trace Canadian experiences that are directly linked to values and principles addressed in the previous section.

the concept of self-determination without secession and various forms of "non-sovereign" governance – themes that come to mind when addressing Aboriginal and Quebec issues. Canada could share its aboriginal self government and land claims models and experiences. Federalism at the local level, such as teachers' federations may be also of some value. Canada's history of peacefully and creatively working o these ideas of governance, coexistence, and civil society engagement may have some bearing in other parts of the world.

2. ***Social structures and safety nets***: Canada could offer its "experience" in building its own social structures to countries in need of advise or expertise in this area. In the context of the Hemisphere foreign policy, Canada could become "the Nordics" of the Hemisphere.

3. ***Progressive environmental legislation and policies.*** In particular, based on its own wealth of experience with water-related issues, Canada could develop a strategy for addressing global water-related problems.

4. ***Taxation systems.***

5. ***Judiciary and the legal system.***

6. ***Canada as a leader in closing the "digital" divide.***

7. ***Canada's work with Indigenous Peoples (particularly urban youth).***

8. ***Management and the emphasis on Canada's human resources.***

9. ***Remote delivery of health care may be helpful in exporting our "distant" delivery health care systems.***

10. ***Canada could develop a Spanish-language programming directed at Latin America and use its long distance education expertise.***

Perception of Canada Abroad

Canada is well positioned to intervene in the world for several reasons:

- it is well structured and stable;
- Canadians are perceived as humble;
- Canada is not perceived as dominating/superpower;
- Canada does not have a colonial/neo-colonial heritage;
- Canada is seen a standing up for others and as promoting international standards;
- Canada is seen as having an expertise in managing conflicts (i.e., assisting interventions, mediating between the big powers, etc.).

Some of the traits that may hinder the impact/leverage of Canadian foreign policy in the world include:

- Canada's close relationship to the United States, G-7 and most importantly the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation;
- apparent incongruence between domestic and international policy;
- cutbacks to the development assistance;
- the monopolisation of Canadian media by Conrad Black;

Conclusion

Value-led Canadian foreign policy demands that peacebuilding and other interventions are not limited to interstate conflict, but include environmental disasters, inter-ethnic conflicts and large-scale human rights violations. There is a need to negotiate better the link between Canadian foreign policy interests and Canadian values. More discussion on what the terms "Canadian values" and "civil society" means is necessary. Education, information sharing and communication are frequently stressed as key to ensuring Canadian values are embedded in public policy and promoted abroad.